



TOWN OF HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS POLICE DEPARTMENT

2021 Use of Force Annual Report

To: Chief Michael Mason

From: Lt. Mitchell Kuc

Re: Annual Use of Force Report, CY 2021

Chief,

As required by our Use of Force Reporting Policy, please find here a summary of the annual Use of Force data for the calendar year 2021.

Local Considerations

As you are aware, the Town of Hadley's commercial base, centralized location to the Five College area and location between Interstate 91 and UMass Amherst brings tens of thousands of non-residents through and to town each day, in addition to the nearly 5200 permanent residents. Statistics available by UMass Amherst show that in 2020 there were 24,233 students enrolled. Statistics from MassDOT on traffic counts vary depending on how many counters, or stations are deployed in a given year. In 2013, there were seven stations giving a total daily traffic count of over 66,000 cars. In 2015 there were five separate stations that reported over 40,000 cars per day. In the 2015 and 2013 counts, only one station is duplicated. A combination of the 12 stations indicates that traffic through Hadley may be just below 100,000 cars daily on average during that span of years.

The number of non-owner occupied rental properties and hotels in Hadley also raises the number of number of individuals staying within the Town of Hadley significantly. There are seven major hotels with a total of 597 rooms, as well as the Knights Inn with 23 rooms.

Use of Force and Reporting Standards

A reported Use of Force is not necessarily the actual application of physical force, such as strikes, or the use of a taser or baton by a police officer onto a subject, and may even include situations where a subject was completely unaware of any force used. Reportable Use of Force may include situations where lethal and less-lethal weapons are presented and not used, as well hands-on techniques where minor force is used, for example, to remove an unwanted



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person from a business, or to overcome minor resistance/refusal to comply or become handcuffed.

Investigations

Investigations are completed at all levels of supervision, from the Officer's supervisor, to the Lieutenant, to the Chief. All supervisors have been trained in conducting Internal Affairs Investigation, including myself who is certified to do so, as well as to conduct investigations in Use of Force incidents. The department also has a Defensive Tactics/Use of Force Instructor on-staff.

All of the incidents were investigated and the force applied in each case was found to be justified. Additionally, no civilian complaints were received following any Use of Force incident.

Overview

During 2021, Officers of the Hadley Police Department used reportable force at 25 separate incidents. Two Officers received minor scratches, and one officer suffered a broken finger during separate incidents. One suspect had minor puncture wounds from a taser probe deployment. Of those 25 incidents, 14 of those did not result in actual physical force from an officer being applied to the suspect; those force incidents mainly involved Taser or Pistol presentation. Of the remaining 11 incidents, only four incidents involved force where a subject was physically fighting with officers. The remaining incidents involved minor resisting.

Furthermore, of the 25 incidents, two involved the same individual on two separate occasions bringing the number of people that force was used against down to 24, and of 24, only three were town residents. Of the town residents, two had actual force applied, one of which was very minor.

Lethal weapons were presented during eight separate incidents, six of which were felony motor vehicle stops or other cases involving motor vehicles. The other two incidents included a fight between two subjects involving a knife, as well as a shooting/attempted murder at Wal-Mart. No officer discharged their weapons in 2021 other than for training purposes or animal destruction, and there were no incidents of serious bodily injury or death to any suspect.

Electronic Conductive Weapons (ECW's), or Taser's were deployed during eight incidents, six of which tasers were only presented. The two remaining incidents involved the use of the taser against a subject; one incident involved a probe deployment as well as a drive-stun, or weapon-



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to-body contact, and the other involved only a drive-stun. The incident involving probes involved an assaultive individual who was striking an officer, and the other incident where drive-stun was used involved an actively resistant individual.

Demographics on Use of Force

Gender- 17 Male, 7 Female

Race- 19 Caucasian, 4 African American, 1 Asian

Average Age- 38

The following are the types of incidents where force was used;

Domestic Assaults- 4

Other Assaults- 3

Motor Vehicle Stops- 4

Robbery/Larceny-2

Disturbance-2

Drunk Driving-1

Other-9

The following shows the break-down of substance abuse or mental health crisis in Use of Force Incidents;

Mental Health-10

Substance Use- 5

A further analysis of the 10 calls where mental health was determined to be a factor, officers were only aware that they were encountering a person experiencing a mental health crisis prior to arrival on two occasions. Of the 10 incidents, Staff Crisis Clinician Emma Reilly (who started working in October) was on scene for two of the incidents and requested a section 12 issuance,



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and officers requested section 12 issuance on three separate occasions. In four cases, officers chose to forgo criminal charges, and referral to mental health treatment was the final disposition. Five of the six remaining incidents did not rise to the level where the subject was suicidal or otherwise a danger to themselves, and were referred to the criminal court system. One incident was referred for mental health treatment, as well as to the criminal court system and the matter was dismissed following court ordered mental health treatment.

Department Considerations

CY 2021 Statistics showed that Use of Force related incidents most often occur on the 3-11 shift on the weekend. Of the 24 incidents, 10 resulted in mental health evaluations or transportation for medical evaluation not related to use of force. Seventeen incidents resulted in the filing for applications for criminal complaints, noting that some incidents resulted in both an evaluation as well as criminal charges.

In comparison to 2020, which had 13 Use of Force incidents, 2021 saw nearly a doubled increase in reported Use of Force. It is my belief that the increase in Use of Force incidents can be attributed in part to a 21% increase in call volume, as well as the mental health impact from the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. Supporting documentation of the impact on mental health as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic can be found on the website of the National Institute of Mental Health, Center for Disease Control, and the Mayo Clinic, to name a few.

In closing, with force being used in 0.14% of incidents, that 84% of our Use of Force Incidents involve calls for service (100% of Use of Force Incidents involving non-white individuals were calls for service, and not initiated by police) as opposed to calls initiated by officers, with injuries to officers and suspects being mostly minor and very rare, I do not find any recognizable need for re-training, nor do I have any recommendations for policy or procedure adjustments.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lt. Mitchell Kuc